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DEC 10 2009

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Herwig :
Application No. 10/519,174 :
Filed: 20 December, 2004 :
Attorney Docket No. 13027.60USWO :

DECISION

This is a decision on the petition filed on 17 September, 2009, considered as a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 (no fee) requesting withdrawal of the holding of abandonment in the above-identified application, alternatively pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) for revival of an application abandoned due to unintentional delay.

The petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is **DISMISSED**; the petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **GRANTED**.

NOTE: Petitioner has chosen to bury within the second page of his petition a request to withdraw the holding of abandonment, which he makes not only un-signaled elsewhere and/or in title of his papers but also in a wholly unsupported manner. (*See:* the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I).)

As one registered to practice before the Office, Petitioner is aware that such a practice is inappropriate. (*See: inter alia*, 37 C.F.R. §1.4(c).)

**As to the Request to Withdraw
the Holding of Abandonment**

Petitioners always are directed to the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) for guidance as to the proper showing and timeliness requirements for relief under 37 C.F.R. §1.181.

Petitioner appears not to comply with the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I)—as discussed below, Petitioner has failed to satisfy the showing requirements set forth there. Petitioner may find it beneficial to review that material and move step-wise through that guidance in the effort to satisfy the showing requirements (statements and supporting documentation).

As to the Allegations
of Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee.

Petitioners' attentions always are directed to the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(II).

BACKGROUND

The record reflects as follows:

Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the final Office action mailed on 16 May, 2008, with reply due absent an extension of time on or before 16 August, 2008.

On 16 October, 2008, Petitioner filed a request and fee for extension of time and an amendment after final, which the Examiner refused to enter and Petitioner—as one registered to practice before the Office—knew was not as of right and not a proper reply¹ if it did not *prima facie* place the application in condition for allowance. On 20 November, 2008, the Examiner mailed an Advisory Action.

The application went abandoned by operation of law after midnight 16 October, 2008 (the Notice of Abandonment suggests, erroneously, that the reply was due to the 20 November, 2008, Advisory Action).

The Office mailed the Notice of Abandonment on 17 June, 2009.

On 17 September, 2009, Petitioner filed, *inter alia*, a petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181, buried within the second page of his petition, as request to withdraw the holding of abandonment—for which Petitioner fails to provide any of the required showing with supporting documentation—and a petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b), a reply in the form of a request for continued examination (RCE) and fee with a submission in the form of an amendment pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.114, and made the statement of unintentional delay. (Petitioner avers that the failure to include an RCE and fee was an oversight, and so states that “if the Petition to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment is found insufficient please consider this as a petition [to revive].”)

¹ A proper reply is an amendment *prima facie* placing the application in condition for allowance, a Notice of Appeal, or an RCE (with fee and submission under 37 C.F.R. §1.114). (See: MPEP §711.03(c).)

The record (including the petition filed on 17 September, 2009) does not necessitate a finding that the delay between midnight 16 October, 2008 (the date of abandonment), and 17 September, 2009 (the date of the filing of grantable petition), was not unintentional.

Rather, the Patent and Trademark Office is relying in this matter on the duty of candor and good faith of Petitioner/Counsel Gregory A. Sebald (Reg. No. 33,280) when accepting Petitioners' representation that the delay in filing the response was unintentional.²

The availability of applications and application papers online to applicants/practitioners who diligently associate their Customer Number with the respective application(s) now provides an applicant/practitioner on-demand information as to events/transactions in an application.

Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that those registered to practice and all others who make representations before the Office **must** inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation—since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.³

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).⁴ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a Petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority.

Unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁵)

With regard to a petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181, the guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) provides:

² See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing the statement required by 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) to the Patent and Trademark Office).

³ See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on petitioner's duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

⁴ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

⁵ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

37 C.F.R. §1.10(c) through §1.10(e) and §1.10(g) set forth procedures for petitioning the Director of the USPTO to accord a filing date to correspondence as of the date of deposit of the correspondence as “Express Mail.” A petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment relying upon a timely reply placed in “Express Mail” must include an appropriate petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.10(c), (d), (e), or (g) (see MPEP §513). When a paper is shown to have been mailed to the Office using the “Express Mail” procedures, the paper must be entered in PALM with the “Express Mail” date.

Similarly, applicants may establish that a reply was filed with a postcard receipt that properly identifies the reply and provides *prima facie* evidence that the reply was timely filed. See MPEP §503. For example, if the application has been held abandoned for failure to file a reply to a first Office action, and applicant has a postcard receipt showing that an amendment was timely filed in response to the Office action, then the holding of abandonment should be withdrawn upon the filing of a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment. When the reply is shown to have been timely filed based on a postcard receipt, the reply must be entered into PALM using the date of receipt of the reply as shown on the post card receipt.

Where a certificate of mailing under 37 C.F.R. §1.8, but not a postcard receipt, is relied upon in a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment, see 37 C.F.R. 1.8(b) and MPEP §512. As stated in 37 C.F.R. §1.8(b)(3) the statement that attests to the previous timely mailing or transmission of the correspondence must be on a personal knowledge basis, or to the satisfaction of the Director of the USPTO. If the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing is not made by the person who signed the Certificate of Mailing (i.e., there is no personal knowledge basis), then the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing should include evidence that supports the conclusion that the correspondence was actually mailed (e.g., copies of a mailing log establishing that correspondence was mailed for that application). When the correspondence is shown to have been timely filed based on a certificate of mailing, the correspondence is entered into PALM with the actual date of receipt (i.e., the date that the duplicate copy of the papers was filed with the statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.8).

37 C.F.R. §1.8(b) also permits applicant to notify the Office of a previous mailing or transmission of correspondence and submit a statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.8(b)(3) accompanied by a duplicate copy of the correspondence when a reasonable amount of time (e.g., more than one month) has elapsed from the time of mailing or transmitting of the correspondence. Applicant does not have to wait until the application becomes abandoned before notifying the Office of the previous mailing or transmission of the correspondence. Applicant should check the private Patent Application Information

Retrieval (PAIR) system for the status of the correspondence before notifying the Office. See MPEP §512.⁶

Allegations as to the Request to
Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment

The guidance in the Commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I) specifies the showing required and how it is to be made and supported.

Petitioner appears not to have made the showing required.

As to Allegations of
Unintentional Delay

The requirements of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee therefor, a reply, a proper statement of unintentional delay under the regulation, and, where applicable, a terminal disclaimer and fee.

It appears that the requirements under the rule have been satisfied.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is dismissed; the petition pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is granted.

The instant application is released to the Technology Center/AU 1643 for further processing in due course.

Petitioner may find it beneficial to view Private PAIR within a fortnight of the instant decision to ensure that the revival has been acknowledged by the TC/AU in response to this decision. It is noted that all inquiries with regard to that change in status need be directed to the TC/AU where that change of status must be effected—that does not occur in the Office of Petitions.

⁶ See: MPEP §711.03(c) (I)(B).

Telephone inquiries regarding this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214—it is noted, however, that all practice before the Office is in writing (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.2⁷) and the proper authority for action on any matter in this regard are the statutes (35 U.S.C.), regulations (37 C.F.R.) and the commentary on policy (MPEP). Therefore, no telephone discussion may be controlling or considered authority for Petitioner's action(s).



John J. Gillon, Jr./
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⁷ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:
§1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.